

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

More importantly, the use of public airwaves imposes on Sinclair and all broadcasters an obligation to serve the public interest, not the corporate interest, and certainly not one particular political party's interest. Privilege always comes at the price of responsibility. By repeatedly showing only one side, Sinclair robs "We the people" of a legitimate and necessary source for the information we need to do our own public duty well. This shows a patronizing disregard for the public hand that feeds Sinclair.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. This is not about party loyalty. This is about public servants remembering to serve the public, and the public -- in this case, myself -- demanding said service.

Thank you.

Carol Flynt